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## THE BEACH IN 1849

There is a passage in Justin Winsor's *A History of the Town of Duxbury* (published in 1849) which shows that concern over the ravages of the sea was felt a century ago, and not without reason:

"Fears have been entertained, in times past, that at some time the sea might force its way through the beach at various places, and to guard against this, there was built, some years ago, with much labor and expense, at many points throughout its whole extent, a kind of seawall, placed for the greatest part on the inner side of the beach, and formed by a double line of fences, made by stakes driven in the ground, and seaweed thrown between. This was accomplished under the direction of L. G. Sampson, Esq., then deputy collector of Plymouth district for the port of Duxbury, and paid for by an appropriation of Congress, amounting to several thousand dollars, and a large number of men were there employed for 3 or 4 weeks. At this time an appropriation was made by the town, and the whole extent of the beach purchased, and it is now the town's property.

"One of the best methods of preventing the destruction of the beach, is to attend to the preservation of the beach grass. Several times the seed has been sown at different points, and even as early as 1751 the town took measures to prevent the grass being eaten by cattle. At a town meeting this year, on the 20th of May, they voted 'to petition the General Court to get an act to prevent neat cattle going upon or feeding on Duxbury beach for the future.'"

Let's remember that beach grass and other vegetation is what keeps the sand dunes at a height which gives some protection to the beach. "The parking areas which most need this protection," said Frederick Pratt, "are at the same points where public use of the beach destroys the beach grass."